

Message Text

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ACTION VO-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7804

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS ASFP BB BW VI

SUBJ: PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF 22 CFR 41.6 (B)

REF: STATE 202521

1. IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN REALLY ACCURATE FIGURES OF THE NUMBERS OF GRENADIANS AND BARBADIANS WHO WOULD APPLY FOR VISAS TO ENTER PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS IF THE NIV REQUIREMENT WERE TO BE IMPOSED ONLY ON NATIONALS OF THE TWO INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES IN OUR CONSULAR DISTRICT. THE THREE MAJOR AIRLINES (PANAM, BWIA AND EASTERN) OPERATING OUT OF BARBADOS REPORT THAT DURING CALENDAR YEAR 1973 THEY BOARDED 17,811 PASSENGERS FOR SAN JUAN. MANY OF THESE TRAVELERS WOULD HAVE BEEN USCITS, IMMIGRANTS AND NIVS DESTINED TO CONTINENTAL U.S. NO BREAKDOWN EXISTS FOR THOSE ENTERING PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGINS WITHOUT VISAS. THE OTHER PRINCIPAL CARRIER, LIAT, FLEW IN 1973 A TOTAL OF 33,043 PASSENGERS FROM VARIOUS POINTS IN CONSULAR DISTRICT TO PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGINS. OF THIS NUMBER, 1182 BOARDED AT BARBADOS' AIRPORT AND 598 AT GRENADA. LIAT AREA MANAGER UNABLE TO FURNISH SPECIFIC INFORMATION REGARDING CITIZENSHIP OR WHETHER PASSENGERS TRAVELING WITH OR WITHOUT VISAS BUT STATED FROM HIS EXPERIENCE MANY TRAVELERS TO PUERTO RICO AND ALMOST ALL DESTINED TO ST CROIX AND ST THOMAS WERE VISA WAIVER CASES. SOME TRAVELERS ENTER PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGINS BY SHIP BUT EMBASSY UNABLE TO DEVELOP ANY STATISTICS FOR THIS METHOD OF TRANSPORTATION.

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2. DISTRICT DIRECTOR, INS SAN JUAN INFORMED EMBASSY THAT

STATISTICS OF TYPE DESIRED BY DEPT ARE NOT MAINTAINED. HE ESTIMATES THAT ARRIVALS OF NON-IMMIGRANTS IN SAN JUAN UNDER PRESENT WAIVER BY PLANE FROM BARBADOS TOTAL SOME 1700 PER ANNUM AND FROM GRENADA ABOUT 600. THESE FIGURES DO NOT ESTABLISH THAT THE 2300 PASSENGERS INVOLVED ARE OF BARBADIAN OR GRENADIAN NATIONALITY NOR DOES THE 2300 FIGURE QUOTED NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF BARBADIANS OR GRENADIANS WHO ENTER PUERTO RICO OR THE U.S. VIRGINS UNDER THE WAIVER SINCE SOME MIGHT COME FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS. ST CROIX AND ST THOMAS EACH RECEIVE ABOUT 300 APPLICANTS FROM GRENADA A YEAR UNDER THE WAIVER AND APPROXIMATELY 10 BARBADIANS APPLY TO ENTER AT ST CROIX. IF THESE ESTIMATES ARE ACCEPTED, EMBASSY COULD THEREFORE, EXPECT TO RECEIVE NOT MORE THAN 2,900 ADDITIONAL APPLICATIONS PER ANNUM FOR VISAS FROM BARBADIANS AND GRENADIANS. THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR POINTED OUT THAT MANY SUCH APPLICANTS WOULD NOT RECEIVE VISAS IF INTERVIEWED BY CONSULAR OFFICERS BEFORE THEY TRAVELED TO PUERTO RICO OR U.S. VIRGINS. OF THE 2300 WHO APPLY TO ENTER AT SAN JUAN, ABOUT 670 ARE REFUSED ADMITTANCE.

3. EMBASSY HAS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED FEASIBILITY OF SENDING CONSULAR OFFICER TO OTHER ISLANDS TO ACCEPT NIV APPLICATIONS BUT FOR GOOD REASONS HAS DECIDED AGAINST IMPLEMENTING SUCH A PROGRAM ON A REGULAR BASIS. IF OFFICER WERE TO BE DETAILED TO GRENADA, WHICH MANY YEARS AGO, BUT WITHIN LIVING MEMORY HAD A RESIDENT CONSULAR OFFICE, ANTIGUA WOULD CERTAINLY INSIST ON SAME TREATMENT FOR IDENTICAL REASONS. ANTIGUA IS NEXT STATE IN CONSULAR DISTRICT EXPECTED TO BECOME INDEPENDENT, PROBABLY BY 1976, AND OTHERS WILL CERTAINLY FOLLOW SUIT BY 1980 AT LATEST. THIS WOULD REQUIRE ALMOST PERMANENT TDY ASSIGNMENT OF AT LEAST ONE OFFICER JUST TO "TOUR" ISLANDS. OFFICER(S) COULD ONLY TAKE APPLICATIONS AND THEN MAIL THEM BACK TO BARBADOS FOR ISSUANCE PROCESS OF FILE CHECKS, VLOB AND TODD VISA ISSUING MACHINE. THIS HAS BEEN DONE ON OCCASION INVOLVING EMERGENCIES OR PACKAGE TOURS BUT IS NOT RECOMMENDED ON A PERMANENT BASIS.

4. EMBASSY ASSUMES THAT STRONGEST OBJECTIONS TO IMPOSING VISA REQUIREMENT WHICH HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM DEPENDENT AREAS PROBABLY CAME FROM GOVT OF BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS IN VIEW OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CLOSE PROXIMITY TO U.S. VIRGINS AND PUERTO RICO. IF WAIVER IS MODIFIED TO PERMIT ANY ISLANDERS FROM OUR DISTRICT TO CONTINUE TO ENTER WITHOUT VISAS, BELIEVE THAT BVI SHOULD BENEFIT. HOWEVER, PERMITTING ANY RESIDENTS OUR DISTRICT TO BENEFIT FROM WAIVER WHILE REQUIRING VISAS FOR OTHERS SMACKS OF DISCRIMINATION. THIS ALSO APPLIES TO IMPOSING VISA REQUIREMENT ON INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES BUT NOT ON THE WEST INDIES ASSOCIATED STATES (WIAS). THE WIAS ARE INTERNALLY SELFGOVERNING STATES

WITH GREAT BRITAIN RETAINING RESPONSIBILITY ONLY FOR DEFENSE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. IF BVI RESIDENTS ARE EXCUSED FROM VISA REQUIREMENT THEN COLONY OF MONTserrat, WHICH HAS IDENTICAL POLITICAL STATUS, SHOULD BE TREATED SIMILARLY.

5. IF EXCEPTIONS ARE MADE, IT SEEMS TO EMBASSY THAT THE WHOLE QUESTION OF CONTROLS AND VISAS SHOULD BE REVIEWED. DISTRICT DIRECTOR ALSO INFORMED EMBASSY THAT FLIGHTS TO MAINLAND FROM SAN JUAN ARE PRE-INSPECTED BY INS. EMBASSY CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY INS CANNOT PREVENT NON-RESIDENT ALIENS FROM PROCEEDING TO THE MAINLAND IF THEY ARE NOT IN POSSESSION OF VISAS. INS WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE INSPECTIONS EVEN UNDER PROPOSED VISA PROGRAM TO WEED OUT THOSE APPLICANTS WHO HAVE RECEIVED VISAS VALID ONLY FOR PUERTO RICO OR USVI.

6. TO SUM UP, INCREASED VOLUME OF BUSINESS (ISSUANCE AND REFUSALS) WHICH MUST BE ANTICIPATED BY EMBASSY WILL BE TOO GREAT FOR PRESENT STAFF AND PHYSICAL PLANT TO ASSIMILATE WHETHER VISA REQUIREMENT IMPOSED ON ALL TRAVELERS FROM DISTRICT OR ONLY ON THOSE FROM THE INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES. DEPT WILL RECALL THAT IN CONSULAR PACKAGE DATED JUNE 13, 1974, EMBASSY ESTIMATED, FROM INS SOURCES, THAT IF VISAS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF DISTRICT TO VISIT PUERTO RICO OR USVI, TOTAL VISA SERVICES COULD INCREASE BY 2,000 A MONTH.
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